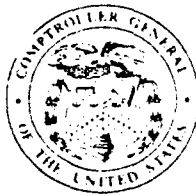


DECISION

**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FILE: **B-184352**DATE: **JUN 14 1976**

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MATTER OF: **Sol Rosen - Claim for miscellaneous expenses
in connection with transfer**

DIGEST:

Incident to transfer of official duty station, employee may be reimbursed cost of transformers necessary to accommodate 110-V electrical equipment under miscellaneous expenses allowances, but not cost of new clocks or automobile equipment for automobile not authorized nor shipped at Government expense; also, when apartment is not located within the United States, its territories or possessions, the Canal Zone, or Puerto Rico, cost of recording lease, etc., is reimbursable if such cost is customary in area.

This decision is in response to a request from an authorized certifying officer for an advance decision as to whether a voucher for certain miscellaneous moving expenses may be paid.

Sol Rosen, an employee of the Energy Research and Development Administration, was transferred from Washington, D.C., to Brussels, Belgium, in August 1973. Mr. Rosen itemized miscellaneous expenses totaling \$581.93 and claims reimbursement for such expenses. If an employee itemizes miscellaneous expenses, he may be reimbursed therefor in an amount not to exceed 2 weeks basic pay when he is an employee with a family. See Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) para. 2-3.3b (May 1973).

Those expenses claimed by Mr. Rosen for which an advance decision has been requested are as follows:

1. Transformers (11 with a range of 300 - 2000 W),
2. Electric Clocks (4),
3. Automobile equipment (first aid kit; fire extinguisher; and warning triangle),
4. Apartment rental expenses (mandatory registration of apartment lease; nonreimbursable rental guarantee; apartment survey).

Item 1 was necessitated because the electrical outlets in Belgium are designed to accommodate 220-V equipment instead of 110-V equipment as are outlets in the United States. Mr. Rosen reports that his home in the United States was equipped with well over one hundred 110-V outlets and that, even with the use of the acquired 11 multiple transformers, he only has 17 outlets of varying capacity available to him. Expenses payable under the miscellaneous expenses allowance in the Federal Travel Regulations include "expenses that are common to living quarters, furnishings, household appliances, and to other general types of costs inherent in relocation of a place of residence" and for "connecting appliances, equipment, or utilities involved in relocation." FTR para. 2-3.1b (May 1973). We believe that the expense incurred comes within the intent of FTR para. 2-3.1b(1) (May 1973). See B-183789, January 23, 1976, and B-182168, April 22, 1975. Since the transformers were necessary to permit operation of Mr. Rosen's appliances on the available utilities, reimbursement may be made for their cost.

Item 2 was purportedly required because U.S. clocks cannot be used in Belgium. We have previously disallowed the cost of new appliances where the employee's own appliance cannot be converted. We believe the cost of new clocks come within the intent of FTR para. 2-3.1c(5). See B-182139, March 5, 1975.

Item 3 consists of various automobile equipment not required in the United States. Mr. Rosen was not authorized and did not ship an automobile to Brussels at Government expense. He reports that the equipment, consisting of first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and warning triangle, was mandatory as it is illegal to operate an automobile in Brussels without this equipment. However, the equipment was newly acquired and, therefore, its cost is for disallowance. FTR para. 2-3.1c(5) (May 1973); B-182168, April 22, 1975, and cases cited therein.

Item 4 represents various rental expenses, including registration of apartment lease, a nonreimbursable rental guarantee, and an apartment survey. In B-169335, May 22, 1970, it was held that a customary rental fee paid by an employee in order to secure housing in foreign countries may be reimbursed as a part of miscellaneous expenses. The same would be applicable where an employee is required to pay analogous fees as enumerated above assuming, of course, that such payment is customary in the area. Therefore, if

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the Energy Research and Development Administration can satisfy itself that the subject rental fees are established practice in Brussels, Belgium, the fees may be approved for payment.

The voucher is returned herewith and should be handled in accordance with the above.

R.F. KELLER

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States